

4. CONTACT INFORMATION

In this section, you will find information on how to:

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a. Develop Regional and Local Media Contact Lists (Including After-Hours News Desks)

Background: Importance of Developing Local Media Contact Lists¹

In dealing with the media, public health officials face a strange dichotomy. On the one hand, the advent of the 24-hour news cycle, the explosion of news outlets, including electronic sources and the phenomenon of “pack journalism” have created immense media pressure during an emergency.² On the other hand, fewer and fewer journalists specialize in public health. Many journalists are also not familiar with issues related to bioterrorism, which makes it difficult for them to know the important questions that they should ask during an emergency and evaluate the reliability of sources providing them with information. The result is that they may omit key points that could provide a sense of balance in their reporting.³

When building relationships with the media, it is important to keep **an updated contact list** so that public health officials can reach reporters and editors in an emergency. The NGA Best Practices Guide suggests that public health officials educate the media about the difficulties faced by public officials during a bioterrorist attack. For example, your agency could hold regular bioterrorism information sessions with your local media (to establish public health officials as credible spokespeople, they should probably also be included in these sessions).⁴

During a public health emergency, it is likely that MDPH will contact the state’s major media outlets. MDPH’s media contact lists are provided here as a starting point for your agency’s own media contact lists. You should be ready to reach out and respond to local media during an ongoing event, such as a disease outbreak, and for seasonal events, such as West Nile virus. It is also advisable to establish ethnic media contacts in your community that may reach special populations (e.g., Spanish language newspapers or radio stations).

Steps for Building Local Media Contact Lists

1. Collect the following information for each local media outlet reaching your community’s population:⁵

¹ Source: United States Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. 2002. *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication*.

² Barbara Reynolds, “CDC Responds: Risk Communication and Bioterrorism,” Telebriefing, December 6, 2001.

³ Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute, p. 185.

⁴ NGA Best Practices, p.27-28.

⁵ ASTDH, pp. 49-52.

- Station/Newspaper Name
- Broadcast Languages
- Hours of Operation
- News Deadlines
- Phone number/email/fax
- Areas of Coverage
- Contact Date
- Response

Consider collecting additional information such as specific reporter's names, phone numbers (work, home, and mobile) and email addresses. CDC's Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication guide also suggests collecting "back-door entries," after hours contact numbers, to editors and reporters to be able to reach them quickly in an emergency.⁶

2. In addition to keeping paper copies of these records, consider developing a **media contact database** that all risk communication staff could access. This would make it easier to update changes easily and would allow collection of additional information. For example, one of the fields could list the public health and bioterrorism articles that a reporter has written and provide directions to an electronic library where the piece is located. Another might include a field for notes about conversations and meetings with reporters and editors that could be useful in a crisis.

3. Update the contact information regularly.

Tools for Developing Local Media Contact Lists

In the following pages, you will find these tools to help you develop media contact lists.

1. Local Media Contacts Template and Database. Use this blank template to record information that you gather about local media outlets, including local TV and radio stations and local newspapers. Add information about specific reporters you speak with, including after hours contact information, as you develop this list.

2. MA Ethnic Media Contacts. This is a list of ethnic media contacts in the state, including media outlets reaching populations who do not speak English.

3. MA Media Contacts. This is a list of all the major media outlets in the state, including the ethnic media contacts. MDPH uses this list to alert the media when there is a public health event.

⁶ Centers for Disease Control, *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication*, September 2002, p.75.

**REFER to EXCEL FILE:
LOCAL MEDIA CONTACTS TEMPLATE AND
DATABASE.xls**

**REFER to EXCEL FILE:
MA ETHNIC MEDIA CONTACTS.xls**

**REFER to EXCEL FILE:
MA MEDIA CONTACTS.xls**

b. Obtain Contact Information for Potential Stakeholders and Partners in an Emergency

Background: Importance of Developing Stakeholder and Partner Contact Lists⁷

In an emergency, your agency will need to quickly coordinate messages (in addition to emergency response) with a range of potential stakeholders and partners. It is important to have up-to-date contact lists to ensure that your agency is both *receiving* and *giving* information effectively during a crisis.

Steps for Building Local Stakeholder and Partner Contact Lists

1. Identify who in your area could be a potential partner or stakeholder in communicating about a public health emergency. Potential stakeholders and partners could include:
 - Community health and human service agencies
 - Other local boards of health in your region
 - Your regional coalition contact
 - MDPH key contacts
 - Local hospitals and laboratories
 - Local police, fire, EMS and Hazmat personnel
2. Use the tools provided in this section to collect and record contact information for key individuals and organizations.
3. Update the contact information regularly.

Tools for Developing Stakeholder and Partner Contact Lists

Use these lists as a starting point for developing your agency's contact lists for potential stakeholders and partners in an emergency.

1. Federal Agency Contacts. This is a list of key federal organizations that may be sources of information and/or assistance during or after a public health emergency.
2. MA Local Health Department Contact List. This list provides contact information for all local boards of health in the state.

⁷ Source: United States Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. 2002. *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication*.

3. MA State Agencies Contact List. This list provides contact information for a wide range of state agencies that may be involved in responding and/or communicating during or after a public health emergency.

Federal Agencies Contact List*

Below is a list and summary of agencies, departments, and partnerships that may play a role in the planning and response to emergency situations.

American Red Cross (<http://www.redcross.org>)

The American Red Cross provides relief to victims of disasters and helps people to prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. When a disaster threatens or strikes, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, health, and mental health services. The Red Cross also feeds emergency workers, handles inquiries from concerned family members outside the disaster area, provides blood and blood products to disaster victims, and helps those affected by disaster to access other available resources. Although chartered by Congress to perform its disaster preparedness and relief mission, the American Red Cross is not a government agency and relies primarily on financial donations from the American people for support.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (<http://www.cdc.gov>)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recognized as the lead federal agency for protecting the health and safety of people—at home and abroad, providing credible information to enhance health decisions, and promoting health through strong partnerships. CDC serves as the national focus for developing and applying disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion and education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States.

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>)

The mission of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), as an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services <http://www.hhs.gov/> and a sister agency to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is to serve the public by using the best science, taking responsive public health actions, and providing trusted health information to prevent harmful exposures and disease related to toxic substances.

ATSDR is directed by congressional mandate [to perform specific functions concerning the effect on public health of hazardous substances in the environment](#). These functions include public health assessments of waste sites, health

* Source: United States Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. 2002. *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication*.

consultations concerning specific hazardous substances, health surveillance and registries, response to emergency releases of hazardous substances, applied research in support of public health assessments, information development and dissemination, and education and training concerning hazardous substances.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (<http://www.cia.gov>)

The CIA provides evidence-based foreign intelligence related to national security, including information about the potential terrorist use of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear agents.

Department of Agriculture (USDA) (<http://www.usda.gov>)

USDA has the primary responsibility for protecting the safety of the nation's food supply. The agency has an overall biosecurity system designed to prevent the harmful introduction of plant and animal pathogens into America's system of agriculture and food production. This system includes resources and response mechanisms in case an emergency should occur. USDA also closely coordinates with the states, industry, law enforcement, and such other federal agencies as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the CDC, and the U.S. Customs Service, on biosecurity issues.

Department of Defense (DoD) (<http://www.dod.gov>)

The armed service branches of DoD, including the Army, Air Force, Marines, Navy, and the National Guard, continue to be the frontline military defense against terrorist threats.

The DoD's **Defense Threat Reduction Agency** focuses specifically on safeguarding America from weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (e.g., chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high explosives) by reducing the present threat and preparing for future threats. <http://www.dtra.mil>.

In addition to their traditional military role, the DoD also supports the operations of other federal government agencies as well as state and local governments. The mission of the **(U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command's (SBCCOM's) Homeland Defense Business Unit)** is to enhance the response capabilities of military, federal, state, and local emergency responders to terrorist incidents involving WMD. http://hld.sbcom.army.mil/about_us.htm

Department of Energy (DOE) (<http://www.energy.gov>)

One of the DOE's primary missions is to enhance national security in relation to nuclear energy. The **Emergency Operations** unit of the **National Nuclear Security**

Administration (NNSA) directs DOE's and NNSA's emergency responses at DOE and NNSA facilities and field sites, and to nuclear and radiological emergencies within the United States and abroad. <http://www.dp.doe.gov>.

The **Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's Chemical and Biological Defense Program's (PNNL's)** researchers focus on the entire spectrum of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. In addition to creating pathogen-detection systems, PNNL prepares military forces and emergency responders to recognize and respond to incidents involving WMD, with emphasis on chemical and biological threats. <http://www.pnl.gov/chembio/index.htm>.

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) (<http://www.hhs.gov>)

DHHS is the primary agency for coordinating health, medical, and health-related social services under the Federal Response Plan. DHHS also provides medical teams to assist the FBI, Secret Service, and Department of State in the field.

The **DHHS National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)** is a federally coordinated system that augments the nation's emergency medical response capability. The overall purpose of the NDMS is to establish a single, integrated, national medical response capability for assisting state and local authorities in dealing with the medical and health effects of major peacetime disasters and providing support to the military and Veterans Health Administration medical systems in caring for casualties evacuated back to the United States from overseas armed conflicts. <http://ndms.dhhs.gov>.

The **DHHS Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP)** has departmental responsibility for managing and coordinating federal health, medical, and health-related social services, and recovery to major emergencies and federally declared disasters, including natural disasters, technological disasters, major transportation accidents, and terrorism. Working in partnership with FEMA and the federal interagency community, OEP serves as the lead federal agency for health and medical services within the Federal Response Plan. OEP also directs and manages the National Disaster Medical System (see below). OEP is also responsible for federal health and medical response to terrorist acts involving WMD. <http://ndms.dhhs.gov/index.html>.

Department of the Interior (DOI) (<http://www.doi.gov>)

The DOI's **Hazards and Facilities Team** of the **Office of Policy Management and Budget** works to ensure adequate capability to prepare for and respond to incidents caused by natural or human effects that impact federal lands, resources (including nationwide fish and wildlife resources, floodplains, wetlands, and cultural/historic resources), facilities, tenants, employees, visitors, and adjacent landowners. <http://www.mrps.doi.gov/hft1.htm>.

Department of Justice, Office for Domestic Preparedness
(<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/>)

The Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), is the program office responsible for enhancing the capacity and preparedness of state and local jurisdictions to respond to WMD incidents of domestic terrorism. ODP's State and Local Domestic Preparedness Program accomplishes this through its training, exercises, equipment grants, and technical assistance programs.

Department of State (<http://www.state.gov>)

State Department activities related to emergency response include protecting and assisting U.S. citizens living or traveling abroad and keeping the public informed about U.S. foreign policy and relations with other countries. The **Office of the Coordinator of Counterterrorism** coordinates all U.S. government efforts to improve counterterrorism cooperation with foreign governments and coordinates responses to major international terrorist incidents in progress. Another primary responsibility of the office is to develop, coordinate, and implement American counterterrorism policy. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct>

Department of Transportation (DOT) (<http://www.dot.gov>)

DOT contains several important agencies that deal with emergency situations. The **U.S. Coast Guard** responds to maritime emergencies and also may assist state and local officials in dealing with chemical incidents, particularly oil and hazardous materials spills. <http://www.uscg.mil/uscg.shtm>.

Other DOT agencies that may be involved in emergency response are the **Federal Aviation Administration** (<http://www.faa.gov>) and the **Federal Railroad Administration** (<http://www.fra.dot.gov>), particularly its Hazardous Materials Division. <http://www.fra.dot.gov/safety/hazmat.htm>

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) (<http://www.tsa.gov>) The TSA is a new agency developed in 2001 in response to the events of September 11 to protect the nation's various transportation systems. Some of its duties include strengthening security systems at airports and coordinating transportation matters for the federal government in the event of a future terrorist incident.

Department of the Treasury (<http://www.treasury.gov>)

The primary divisions of the Department of the Treasury that are involved in emergency response are the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF)** and the **U.S. Customs Service**. ATF supports federal, state, and local governments in responding to

and investigating incidents caused by arson and/or explosives. Its national response teams are typically able to respond within 24 hours of an incident.

<http://www.atf.treas.gov/about/programs/response.htm>

U.S. Customs Service guards the U.S. borders to prevent the entry of illegal substances that may be used for a terrorist attack. <http://www.customs.treas.gov>

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office (CEPPO) (<http://www.epa.gov/ceppo>)

EPA's CEPPO provides leadership, advocacy, and assistance to (1) prevent and prepare for chemical emergencies, (2) respond to environmental crises, and (3) inform the public about chemical hazards in their communities. To protect human health and the environment, CEPPO develops, implements, and coordinates regulatory and nonregulatory programs. The Office carries out this work in partnership with regions, domestic and international organizations in the public and private sectors, and the general public.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (<http://www.fbi.gov>)

The FBI serves as the lead agency for preventing acts of terrorism in the United States. The FBI Web site includes descriptions of major investigations under way as well as specific reports on terrorism.

The **Awareness of National Security Issues and Response (ANSIR) Program** is the FBI's national security awareness program. It is the FBI's public voice for espionage, counterintelligence, counterterrorism, economic espionage, cyber and physical infrastructure protection, and all national security issues. The program is designed to provide unclassified national security threat and warning information to U.S. corporate security directors and executives, law enforcement, and other government agencies. It also focuses on the "response" capability unique to the FBI's jurisdiction in both law enforcement and counterintelligence investigations.

<http://www.fbi.gov/hq/nsd/ansir/ansir.htm>.

Contact	Phone	Pager	Cell Ph	Home
Joe Tamarkin	617-223-6213	617-339-7614	617-460-0540	
Russ Chisholm	617-223-6223	617-430-7798	617-543-4874	781-297-5154
Nick Boshears	617-742-5533		617-543-4876	

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (<http://www.fema.gov/>)

FEMA is the federal agency that coordinates the response of federal agencies to disasters and the communication of information about disasters between federal agencies and the public, particularly within the first 48 hours following the event.

FEMA's Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning State and Local Guide (101),

Chapter 6, Attachment G - Terrorism, Tab B, April 2001, provides a detailed list of federal departments and agencies with counterterrorism-specific roles. Agencies mentioned include FEMA, DOJ, DoD, DOE, DHHS, EPA, DOA, and NRC.

<http://www.fema.gov/rrr/gaheop.shtm>.

National Domestic Preparedness Office (NDPO) (<http://www.ndpo.gov>)

The mission of this office is to coordinate and facilitate all federal WMD efforts to assist state and local emergency responders with planning, training, equipment, exercise, and health and medical issues necessary to respond to a WMD event. Program areas encompass planning, training, exercises, equipment, information sharing, and public health and medical services. Federal partners include FEMA, FBI, DOE, EPA, DOJ, Office for State and Local Domestic Preparedness Support, DHHS, and the National Guard Bureau.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) (<http://www.nrc.gov/>)

NRC's Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response (NSIR) is ready to respond to an event at an NRC-licensed facility that could threaten public health and safety or the environment. NRC's highest priority is to provide expert consultation, support, and assistance to state and local public safety officials responding to an event. Once the NRC incident response program is activated, teams of specialists obtain and evaluate event information to assess the potential impact of the event on public health and safety and the environment. <http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/emer-resp.html>.

Office of Homeland Security (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland>)

The Office of Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Council have been established to develop and coordinate a comprehensive national strategy to strengthen federal, state, and local counterterrorism efforts. Resources include the Homeland Security State Contact List, which shows the homeland security contact for each state.

U.S. National Response Team (NRT) (<http://www.nrt.org>)

The NRT consists of 16 federal agencies with responsibilities, interests, and expertise in various aspects of emergency response to pollution incidents.

**REFER to EXCEL FILE:
MA LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT CONTACT
LIST.xls**

**REFER to EXCEL FILE:
MA STATE AGENCIES CONTACT LIST.xls**

c. **Identify Subject Matter Experts Willing to Work with You During an Event**

Background: Importance of Identifying Subject Matter Experts⁸

Subject matter experts are professionals external to the public health organization who can be called upon for commentary and insight during and after a public health emergency. They serve a key role in building credibility with the media and the public. Your organization should identify and enlist subject matter experts for every likely crisis scenario in advance, and you should keep these experts informed about all aspects of a given situation or issue. The expert should know when s/he will be called upon to offer expertise and consultation, and s/he should be trained and retrained frequently on his/her roles and responsibilities.

Subject matter experts should be individuals who have extensive experience, expertise, and credibility in the relevant field, and they should possess good communication and spokesperson skills. Subject matter experts should be called upon to:

- Work with your organization to develop the content of situation-specific materials including fact sheets, FAQs, and updates before, during, and after a crisis.
- Perform some of your spokesperson duties when someone from your organization is not available or if you are not able to provide technical information. Media and civic groups will appreciate the offer of an alternative if you're unable to meet their needs.
- Act as effective third party validators to the media/public regarding your activities during a public health emergency.
- Verify the situation in the midst of a crisis. This is when having a credible source of outside support will help you gain trust with the media and the public.
- Clarify information when questions come up within your organization or from the media.

Steps for Identifying Subject Matter Experts

1. Identify likely organizations or individuals to serve as sources of subject matter experts. Select people according to their **ability and availability**. Subject matter experts could include:

- Physicians
- Scientists
- Public health professors or researchers
- Community agency and organizations leaders

2. Discuss and agree on the subject matter experts' expertise and expected role in an emergency. Decide among the key areas, mentioned above, in which the subject matter expert will support your agency.

⁸ Source: United States Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. 2002. *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication*.

3. As subject matter experts are identified, it is a good idea to introduce your chosen subject matter experts to the public in advance, to allow them to express their feelings and begin to build their credibility with the public. A press conference or a media opportunity is a good time to do this. It is very important for your subject matter experts to be accepted as credible. If speakers are not well known, attempt to have brief biographies of the speakers, highlighting their accomplishments and expertise in the field.

Tools for Identifying Subject Matter Experts

Use this list as a starting point for identifying your agency's subject matter experts.

1. MA Medical Schools and Teaching Hospitals. This is a contact list for the major medical schools and teaching hospitals in the state. A list like this could be used as the starting point for identifying subject matter experts in your community. In addition to contact information, remember to specify areas of expertise and expected capacity for each subject matter expert.

**REFER to EXCEL FILE:
MA MEDICAL SCHOOLS AND TEACHING
HOSPITALS.xls**